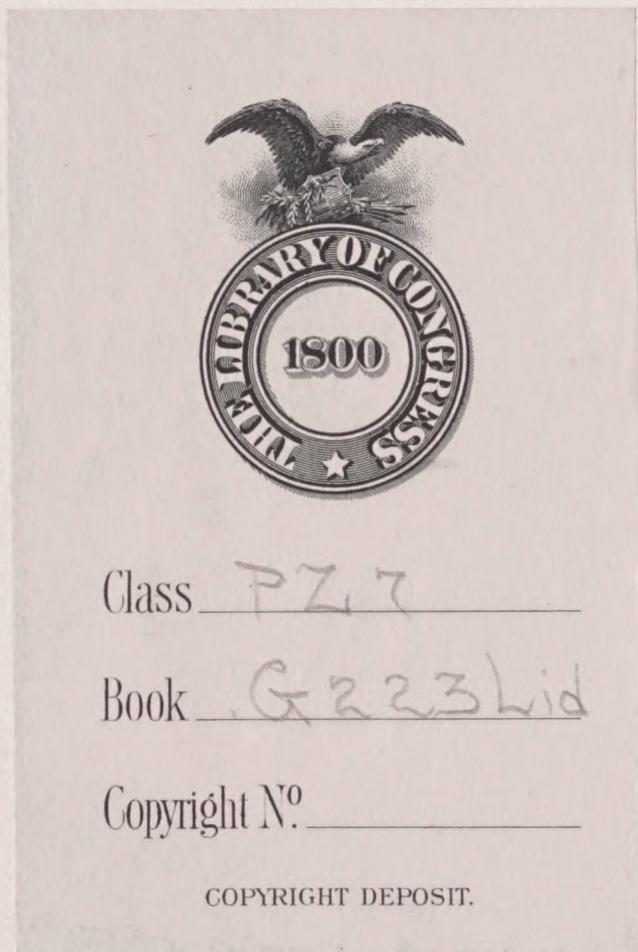


THE LIVE DOLLS BUSY DAYS



Josephine Scribner Gates



The LIVE DOLLS'
BUSY DAYS



The valentines began to prance about the room *See page 100*

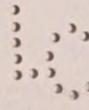
The LIVE DOLLS' B U S Y D A Y S

By
JOSEPHINE SCRIBNER GATES
"

Author of

THE STORY OF LIVE DOLLS
MORE ABOUT LIVE DOLLS
THE STORY OF THE LOST DOLL
THE STORY OF THE THREE DOLLS
THE LIVE DOLLS' HOUSE PARTY
LITTLE RED WHITE AND BLUE

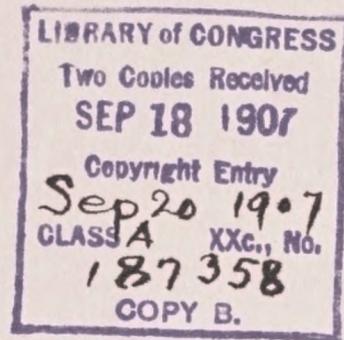
Illustrated by
VIRGINIA KEEP



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The LIVE DOLLS'
B U S Y D A Y S



CHAPTER I

And what *do* you think Santa Claus brought
Janie?

Just what her little heart had been longing for,
the sweetest baby doll you ever saw!

THE LIVE DOLLS'

Christmas morning Janie danced ahead of her papa and mama out to the play-room. For an instant she paused to exclaim over the decorations of holly and Christmas bells, which, with the crackling fire, seemed to echo the joyful cry of "Merry Christmas!" and as she swiftly glanced about, she beheld the precious treasure lying in a cradle, and *such* a cradle!—of white wicker, with blue linings and ribbon bows. Snuggled in among the blankets, with its dear little head on a ruffled pillow, was the wonderful baby, apparently sound asleep, as though weary from its long ride with Santa Claus.

As Janie raised her from her downy nest, the sky-blue eyes opened wide, and she gazed wonderfully into her new mama's face.

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Janie promptly smothered her with kisses, and no real mother was ever more blissfully happy over her own little new baby than was our Janie now.

She patted the little face, tenderly caressed the soft silken curls which covered the head, clasped the dimpled hands in her own, rejoicing in the fact that they were so like a real baby's; then turning her attention to the clothes, she found her robed in a dainty night-dress and snugly pinned up in a flannel blanket.

The first thing most people do when they get hold of a baby is to look at its feet, and, as Janie was just as curious as "most people," she turned back the little nighty, and with a thrill of delight unfastened the pinning blanket, and there, oh, the

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cunning bootees, adorned with ribbon bows!

These she pulled off and found the dainty feet, which she nestled in her hand as she counted the tiny toes.

Satisfied that each foot had five toes, no more and no less, she gently kissed them, as all mothers do, replaced the warm coverings, pinned the blanket securely about them, then drawing down the nighty she ran to show mama her treasure, crying, "Isn't she the very sweetest baby doll you ever saw? And just see the cradle, with sheets and scalloped blankets, and the spread with the pretty bows; and there's a really truly mattress; see it, Mama, isn't it cunning?"

"Indeed, it is, but, Janie, what's that beside the cradle?"

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Janie looked, and there, oh, would wonders never cease? There stood a dresser, which Janie knew must contain clothes for the baby. Sure enough, when she opened the various drawers, she found them filled with all sorts of garments—dresses, petticoats, blankets, knitted jackets and bootees, and even a long coat and bonnet edged with swan's-down.

On top of the dresser was a baby basket trimmed with lace and blue ribbons, and beside the dresser was a bath-tub, just the right size for the wee stranger! Janie could hardly believe her eyes, but there they were.

She decided at once to give the doll a bath, for she must need it after her long journey with Santa Claus.

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"But, dearie," cried papa, "aren't you going to see what's in your stocking?"

Well, of course, she had forgotten about that in the excitement, so she sat down on the floor with her dolly in her lap, and from the stocking drew many gifts which delighted her heart. Among them were a wee brush and comb, a soap-dish that just fitted a tiny cake of soap, a powder-box and puff, a wash-cloth, and a milk-bottle with a rubber mouthpiece; all ready to play "pretend" to her heart's content.

The stocking empty, Janie placed these things in the basket, filled the tub, and went to work to give the new baby a bath.

She removed the baby's clothes, gently bathed its face and neck, then placed it in the tub, making

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it splash about with its hands and feet, exactly as she had seen real babies do.

Dolly seemed to enjoy it as much as Janie, for she dimpled all over with smiles through the whole performance.

Finally she was taken up, carefully dried, and then came the blissful moment of puffing the powder, which Janie did so vigorously that they both looked as if they had been through a spell of sickness.

Next, the baby must be robed in her very prettiest gown, because it was Christmas; and then, as babies must always be fed and have a nap after a bath, she was placed in her cradle with the bottle of milk pressed close to her mouth, so that she could eat or sleep at will.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

Janie then emptied and dried the little tub and tidied up the room. As she sat down in her small rocker by the fire, a heavy sigh came to mama's ears.

"My dear child, aren't you happy?" mama cried in surprise.

"Yes, indeed, Mama, I think I never had anything I loved as I do this baby, except Rosabell!"

"Then what is it? I tried so hard to have Santa Claus bring just what you wanted."

"Well, Mama dear, he did; but it seems to me I never wanted a doll to be alive as I do this one. It would be so cunning to hear it gurgle and goo, and to see it move its little hands, and smile. And how I would love to hear it cry!"

Mama laughed heartily, and replied: "So

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would I. I just love babies, and I thought as you were bathing it what fun it would be to see it kick and stretch and twinkle its eyes the way babies do. But then I suppose we can't always have everything we want. Look out the window, isn't it a beautiful day! See the snow sparkling in the sun! While baby sleeps, why don't you let Rosabell watch her and you go out with your sled?"

"Janie," called papa in great excitement from his position at another window, "look up the street and hark!"

Janie sprang to his side and listened eagerly. Soon the chime of distant bells came to her ears, with the joyous peal of the silver trumpet.

Again and again it sounded, and as it dawned upon them all that it was unmistakable, that it

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surely announced the approach of the dear Queen of Live Dolls, who had visited them before and made the children so happy, the three joined hands and with one accord danced about, while Janie wildly cried:

“Now the baby will be alive! Oh, goody, goody!”

Papa and mama were just as glad as Janie, for they, too, loved the Live Dolls, and they all flew to the door just in time to see a gay little cutter draw up and stop.

The King and Queen, clad from top to toe in sealskin, shouted a cheery “Merry Christmas!” as they clambered out. As they came up the walk, Janie spied something in the Queen’s arms, and exclaimed: “Oh, Mama, she has a baby, too!”



The baby held out its little hands to the blaze

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And so she had!—the tiniest little morsel that ever breathed. Janie held out her arms for it, and as it nestled up to her, it gurgled and gooed, just as Janie longed to have her baby do.

Never had the Queen received a warmer welcome. When the wraps were removed from the baby, and it lay in Janie's lap, enjoying the warmth from the fire, holding out its little hands to the blaze, and trying so hard to talk, the child was wild with joy.

Then when the Queen learned of the addition to Janie's family, she said at once that of course there was nothing to do but to bring that baby to life.

“You see, Janie,” she said, “I wanted to give you something for a Christmas present, and the

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King suggested that perhaps you had a new doll, and that, of course, if you had you would love to have it come to life, and, I am sure, since I see what fun it is to have a live doll of my own, I feel as though I want to come to you as often as possible; so if you really think that Cloverdale is ready for more Live Dolls, I will wave my wand any moment you say."

"They are always ready for them," said mama, "and I think it would be a beautiful thing to do this holiday time."

Janie was speechless with joy, as she listened. She ran over to the cradle to see if it had happened yet; but no, the baby doll had not moved, and the milk was still in the bottle; not a drop had been taken out.

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“Well,” continued the Queen, “I have made a plan this time by which the children will profit with their play, and I hope mama will approve of it, too.

“How would it be, after New Year’s, to turn this big room into a work-room? I will send from Dollville everything for housekeeping—tubs, wash-boards, clothes-bars and irons for the laundry; and a tiny range with pans and kettles for baking and cooking. You can furnish them with needles and thread, so they can mend, and Janie has a little broom, I see. So they can do all of the things housekeepers do, and in between we will plan something else, for ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.’ How does that sound, Janie?”

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Janie stood with hands clasped, drinking in every word.

“Do you mean that we children can wash and iron, sweep and mend, and really and truly bake and cook? Have a fire, and everything?” Janie was almost trembling with excitement.

The Queen twinkled and nodded.

“Then I think it’s almost the best of all ‘cept Fluffytown. I think nothing could ever be any nicer than those paper dolls!”—and Janie threw her arms about the Queen, forgetting the birdling nestling in her lap, who set up an outraged wail, for Janie was leaning against her a little too hard for comfort.

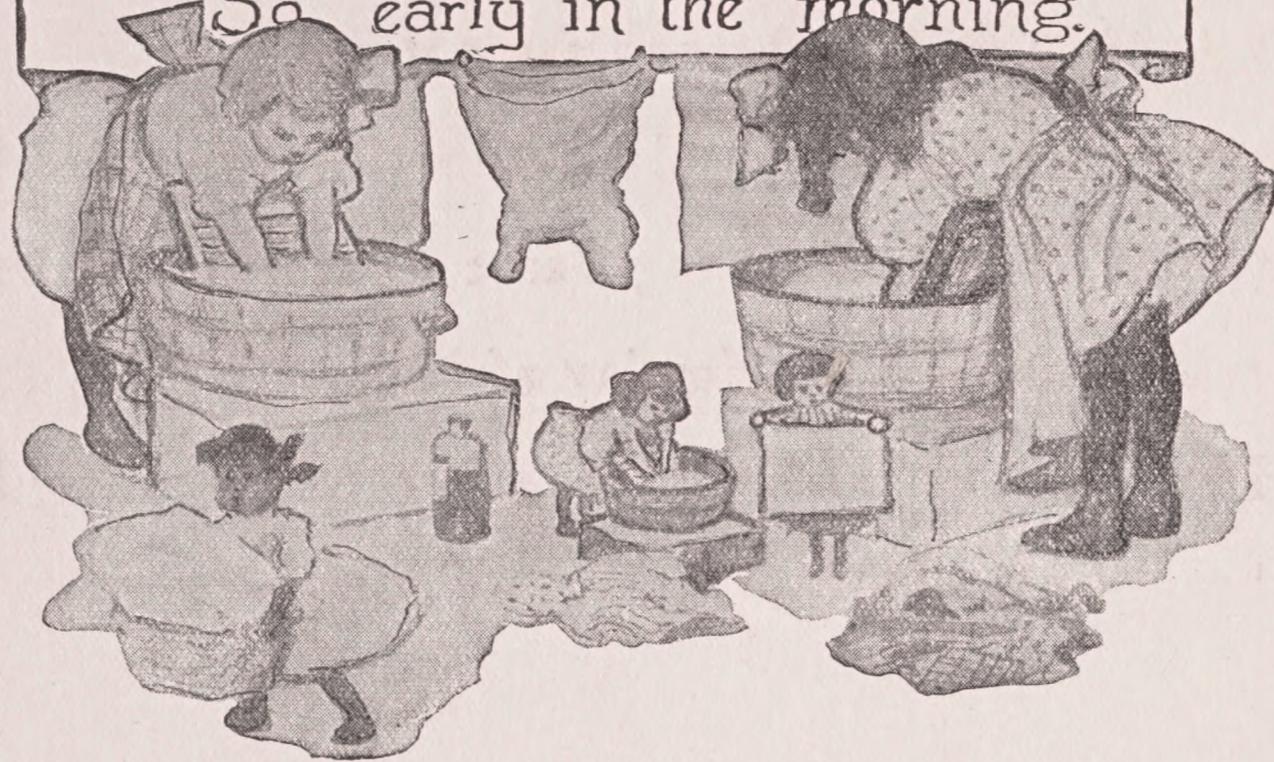
This made them all shout, for it was such a lusty cry; but the Queen quieted the baby as she

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talked over her plan, and papa and mama heartily agreed to do their best to carry it out.

After a jolly visit and a hot lunch the King and Queen departed, telling Janie to watch and be ready for the first Monday after New Year's, as Monday was wash-day in every well-regulated household.

This is the day we wash our clothes,
So early in the morning.



CHAPTER II

Such fun as they had when the great wagon arrived piled high with household goods!

All the children of the village were there to help, and great excitement reigned.

The carpenter had made a pantry with shelves,

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which were all daintily covered with scalloped papers, ready for the shining tins and cooking-dishes.

One shelf was reserved for a tea-set with gold bands, for, of course, they were to have real tea-parties and eat what they cooked.

In one corner of the room the gay little range was set up, and near that was a curtain which formed a partition, so that the laundry could be by itself. Here were placed the tubs, washboards, a dear little boiler, and a number of tiny irons.

The children busied themselves filling the shelves with the pots and pans, exclaiming over them from time to time, for they certainly were adorable.

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Then they put away sugar, flour, butter, eggs, baking powder, and everything needed for cooking, each article being packed in tiny jars as they were in the stores in Dollville.

All this had happened the week before, and, when Monday morning came, the children came tumbling into the enchanted room, each carrying a doll.

As they entered they found Janie bathing the new baby, who gurgled and chuckled, kicking its feet about in the greatest glee to the accompaniment of Janie's laughter. At once the dolls wriggled out of arms, tumbling over one another in their eagerness to prove that they were really and truly alive once more.

"See," Janie cried, "we are to wash to-day.

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The boiler is on and everything is ready for us to go to work as soon as I get baby dressed."

While they waited they all joined in the familiar kindergarten jingle:

" This is the way we wash our clothes,
So early in the morning."

They were here interrupted by a timid knock at the door, which Janie answered. There stood such a funny Live Doll, a small colored girl, who said bashfully:

"I's Topsy, an' I hear you-all's want a maid-of-all-work. I knows cookin' some, an' I kin scrub an' build fires an' take out you-all's ashes."

Just here Janie's mama entered the room, suppressing a smile as she glanced at the new-comer,

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who looked very odd in her yellow dress and bonnet.

Thinking it a good chance for a lesson, mama told Janie she must ask her where she had been working.

To this query Topsy replied:

"I's jist from home. I ain't got no references, but I got some friends what knows the President. I ain't goin' to steal nothin', 'kase I's honest. Case I's hongry in between meals I jist eat potato peelin's. Won't you-alls please lemme stay?"

She looked so wistfully at the little group that mama advised the girls to take her. She could help about the kitchen and watch the baby while they worked.

"And now," said mama, producing some ging-

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ham aprons, "here are your uniforms. Put them on and let us start in. I think we'd better be called the B. B.'s, Busy Bees, for that is what we shall be this week. The dolls had better stay over in that corner, out of the way."

"Why," chorused the girls in dismay, "here are tubs and everything for them just the same as for us. Can't they play, too?"

"Well, well, the poor little chickadees! I forgot that they would want to play. Of course they may. Just see the cunning tubs and wash-boards on purpose!"

So all hands went to work sorting out the clothes. Kerchiefs, stockings, dresses and underwear were placed in small heaps, and then, under mama's direction, the little workers soused them

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in the suds, poked them about in the tiny bright boiler, rinsed them, put them through the small wringer, and at last Topsy carried the well-filled basket on her head to the yard, where they were hung in the sunshine to dry.

"It's a fine windy day," said mama, "they will soon be dry. Now we must clean up the laundry, wipe the boiler so it will not rust, and leave a little water in the tubs so they will not fall apart. Topsy can help you wash up the floor and clean the stove, and then you can go to your dinner, and towards night we will sprinkle and fold the clothes for to-morrow's ironing."

The children departed in high glee; this had been great fun. They had always wanted to wash for their dolls, but somehow it wasn't a success,

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for the clothes always looked worse afterwards, all streaked and grimy; and besides this they spilled the water and spoiled the floor. Here everything was just on purpose, and as they ran down the street they looked with pride at the line full of white garments swaying in the breeze, and longed for the morrow when they could iron and lay them away in small neat piles.

They skipped gaily along, planning what they should do until the important moment arrived when the clothes were to be sprinkled, and suddenly Janie, who had come part way with them, stopped and cried excitedly:

“Oh, girls! I’ve thought of something! You remember the small dolls the Queen gave us when we came from Dollville? Bring them after din-

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ner, except the paper dolls. Save them for another time. We'll have loads of fun! Why didn't we think of it, so they could be alive, too? We'll divide the play-room up so each family can have its own home. I know a fine thing to play. When you come back I'll tell you all about it!"

So after dinner each child appeared with a sleigh full of the small Live Dolls, which the dear Queen had presented to them at the end of the wonderful house-party. These dolls, it will be remembered, were from various foreign countries, and as they came the air was filled with their chatter and rippling laughter. As they unloaded and scampered into the house, an odd picture was presented, for they had been played with so long that many of them were much the worse for wear.



“Now,” said Janie, “we’ll play dairy” *Page 24*

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They were not broken, for their tender-hearted mothers were most particular to keep their little bones in the best of order, but their clothes were torn and they really appeared very shabby.

Mama laughed heartily when she saw them, but comforted them by saying that if they would be patient till mending day came, their wardrobe should be furbished up in fine style.

“Now,” said Janie, “we’ll play dairy. I have washed a lot of bottles, so each one can have some, also a pan and pail. I have divided the room so the small dolls can have their own homes, and we will make milk and sell to them. The dolls can make tickets while we get the milk ready. Mama used to play this when she was a little girl, and she told me how. This is the way: Put water in the

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pans and make it sudsy, so; skim off the foamy part and put in a bottle for cream, then put the rest in bottles for milk. Save some of the thickest suds, and in that put some flour and a little yellow paint like this, and that's butter. See what fine little pats it makes, and, oh, let's stamp it with the stamper! Isn't that lovely?"—and Janie held up a most beautiful imitation pat for inspection, which was very inspiring. They all went to work with the greatest zeal, preparing the milk, cream and butter for early delivery.

Mama as usual entered into the play with great spirit, and made some milk-carts from large boxes, tying a string to one end, and soon the dolls as gallant steeds were racing up and down the room, selling tickets and delivering their products.

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They had much amusement with the foreign population. The Dutch and Scotch dolls hailed them with delight, for they were very fond of milk.

The Japs politely refused it and asked if they could bring them some rice. The Indians grunted, took a little, and demanded some game. The French dolls tossed their heads scornfully and said that the milk was not very good. Janie, determined to give satisfaction, hastened back to her station, and made a whole new lot of milk and cream for the special benefit of the French dolls. They were having great sport when mama called:

“Time to bring in the clothes. Put on your wraps, and be very careful not to tear anything in pulling off the clothes-pins.”

THE LIVE DOLLS'

The basket piled high with the sweet-smelling garments was soon in the room, and the little clothes were quickly sprinkled, folded and ready for the morrow's ironing.

"In the morning," continued mama, "you would better leave the Dollville dollies at home, as the large dolls will want to iron, and you could not accomplish much with so many about. In the afternoon you can bring them and let them play with you. But before you go you must all help to put the room in order. Good housekeepers never go to bed till everything is spick and span. The dollies can sit on the sofa while you straighten up."

So to work they went, and with a hearty will, for they were enjoying every moment of this play

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work-time, or work play-time, whichever it was, and soon all traces of the game had vanished. The shining tins and bottles were in a row on the shelves, the tickets were in a box waiting for the next time, the floor was wiped up, the hearth swept, a basket of kindling was placed by the little range, and the irons were out, ready for duty.

An atmosphere of peace hovered over everything, and our little people beamed with joy. They watched for a time the cheery blaze in the fireplace, thought over the pleasures of the day, and those that were to come, and finally went their way. The dollies bobbed their heads this way and that, as, from their positions in the various sleighs, they tried to look on all sides at once at what was to them a strange, new world.

This is the day we iron our clothes,
So early in the morning.



CHAPTER III

The next morning when the children awakened they were much surprised to find it raining hard.

The January thaw had set in and the snow had all disappeared. It looked very gloomy, but

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Cloverdale children had been taught the beautiful lesson of making sunshine in the house whether or not there was any without. This was ironing day, too, so what cared they for bad weather?

The streets were soon full of Busy Bees, clad in waterproofs and rubbers, carrying umbrellas, all eager to be on hand in the play-room at the regular hour. When mama appeared she found the children and dolls arrayed in clean gingham aprons, ready for work.

Janie proved herself a good little manager, for baby had had her bath and was sleeping peacefully in her cradle, so that her mama could iron her baby clothes.

Topsy had been up for hours and had the irons hot, the ironing-boards and iron-holders all ready.

THE LIVE DOLLS'

As the children busily plied their irons they sang joyously:

“This is the day we iron our clothes, iron our clothes, iron our clothes;

This is the day we iron our clothes,
So early in the morning.”

Mama seemed to be everywhere at once, showing this one how to iron the stiff petticoats, that one a gown, or another a tiny sheet.

The dolls reveled in the kerchiefs and other small pieces, and by noon the bars were well filled with the glossy garments, all nicely done. Then the children sat down to rest and to plan something for the rainy afternoon.

“I know,” said the dear mother, whose fertile brain never failed them in any emergency; “come

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over to our attic. It is warm, and there are trunks and boxes filled with all sorts of things. You can rummage to your hearts' content. You might dress up and have plays. It is a fine place for that and with the Live Dolls I think you could have great fun. As the snow is gone you can't bring the Dollville dolls in your sleighs, so perhaps you had better pack them in market baskets and carry them on your arms. They will enjoy that, I am sure."

The girls presented an amusing picture after dinner, coming up the street, each carrying an umbrella over her basketful of dolls.

And such a time as they had! At first they decided to let the dolls stand up so they could see out, but the midgets were very curious, and per-

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haps not very comfortable. They crowded and pushed, and, I am sorry to say, quarreled!

All the mothers could hear was:

“Don’t step on my toes!”

“Stop pulling my hair!”

“She put her elbow in my eye!”

At last the girls called a halt, and said severely:

“Stop! You are naughty. If you are not good we shall send for the Queen to make you dead.”

“Let’s make them lie down,” said Janie; “mine will fall out if I don’t, for they all get in one end of the basket and make it feel so tippy.”

And so the naughty dollies were laid out like a lot of sausages going to market. They were so frightened at the awful threat that had been made they never whimpered the rest of the day.

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What child does not love an attic, especially on a rainy day?

How awe-inspiring it is to hear the rain so close, yet to know it can not touch you! As they listened to the patter, patter, they turned out the contents of trunks and boxes and reveled in the quaint gowns, hats, bonnets and night-caps.

They were so busy at first they paid little attention to the dolls, who, led by Rosabell, were also on a voyage of discovery. They were finally rewarded by a very rich find in the shape of a doll's trunk, away back in a dark corner.

They tugged away at the lid, which finally yielded, and disclosed an odd, old-fashioned doll, who immediately sat up, looked about and bashfully said:

THE LIVE DOLLS'

"Who are you and what are you going to do with me?"

Rosabell replied:

"Why, we have come to see you; what is your name?"

"Mirandy Alviry Wiggins," primly replied the doll. "What is yours?" The dolls politely stifled their smiles at this old-fashioned name, which sounded very odd to them.

"Mine is Rosabell, and these are Lucile and Marie."

"What queer names!" said Mirandy. "I never heard of Rosa Bell, but Lucy and Maria used to be quite common in my day. I never saw dolls like you, either. Your eyes seem to go when you move, and your hair looks like people's hair. My hair



The dolls politely stifled their smiles

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was always china, and is very much neater, *I* think."

Such a queer doll as she was! She had a china head and a cloth body, in which many rents would have leaked sawdust had she not been alive. On her feet were kid shoes, and her dress, made in the fashion of the long-ago, with tight waist and full skirt, presented quite a contrast to the gowns worn by the other dollies.

"What are you a-going to do?" asked Mirandy.

"Well," replied Rosabell, "our mamas are dressing up in a lot of old clothes they found in a trunk, and we wish we could do the same, but we haven't anything to dress up in."

"Oh," said Mirandy eagerly, "take my clothes. Here's a whole trunk full, and I am sure they will

THE LIVE DOLLS'

fit you,"—and she quickly emptied the trunk, scattering the contents about among the visitors, who put on the odd garments in the greatest glee.

Mirandy reserved for herself what used to be her Sunday go-to-meeting dress. After arraying herself in this, she acted as maid for the other dolls, and soon the whole group pranced over to their mamas to show off.

They were greeted by a chorus of shrieks and laughter, which finally resolved itself into, "How funny! Where did you find them, and who is this?" When the secret was out, Janie in horror clasped Mirandy in her arms, crying:

"She was grandmother's, and I never was allowed to touch her, for fear I might break her. We must put her right away!"

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“But I’m not going to break now. I’m alive, and I don’t want to stay in that old trunk!” Mirandy wistfully declared. “Do let me stay and play with you. I never was alive before, and I used to wish so hard that I could be.”

“Well,” said Janie, “we must go down to grandma’s room and ask her. You girls stay here. I’ll be back in a moment”—and Janie, holding tight to Mirandy’s hand, took her way down-stairs.

Dear old grandma sat by the fire knitting, and as Janie entered the room, she glanced up. When she caught sight of the doll, she threw up her hands, crying:

“Why, Mirandy Alviry Wiggins, all in your best bib and tucker!”

As she talked she took Mirandy on her lap and

THE LIVE DOLLS'

held her close, as she was wont to do in the days of her childhood.

"And to think I should live to see this day! You alive! Dear me suz! And you went and put on your best dress without asking. I declare, I've a notion to box your ears!"

"What's that, Grandma?" asked Janie respectfully.

"Well, child, how your education has been neglected! That's what used to happen to us when we disobeyed. Many a box have I had till my poor ears rang."

"And so have I," said Mirandy with a sly twinkle.

"To my shame be it said, you poor lamb! I did to you just what was done to me. It was a cruel

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thing, for it caused many a child to lose its hearing.

Well, Mirandy, do you remember the day I put you away? My mother decided I was too old to play with dolls. I was only a mite of a child, but I had to do my stint each day,—piece bed-quilts, hem towels and sew the seams of sheets. My, how my poor little arms used to ache and long to hold you, Mirandy! and the day I put you away, how I wept! It broke my heart to give you up, but I played you were Genevra. You know about her, Janie,—how she ran up into the attic her wedding night and hid in a trunk. When they found her she was dead. Mirandy was a new-fashioned Genevra, but here she is, found alive. Bless my soul! It does my old eyes good to see you, Mirandy. Now you may run out and let me have my

THE LIVE DOLLS'

nap. So much strange excitement has quite tired me out."

The two scudded back to their play, stopping for an instant to surprise mama with the apparition of Mirandy alive.

When they reached the attic they found the girls about to have charades. Two curtains stretched across a line shut off the stage, and the dolls and children were audience and actors in turn.

Such a time as they had, guessing and producing the various scenes! Finally they wound up with a thrilling play which grew a little too realistic, when Lucile in blood-curdling tones shrieked:

"I will have revenge! Die, villain!" As she gave the fatal stab she made a misstep, and thrust one fat foot through the ceiling of the room below,

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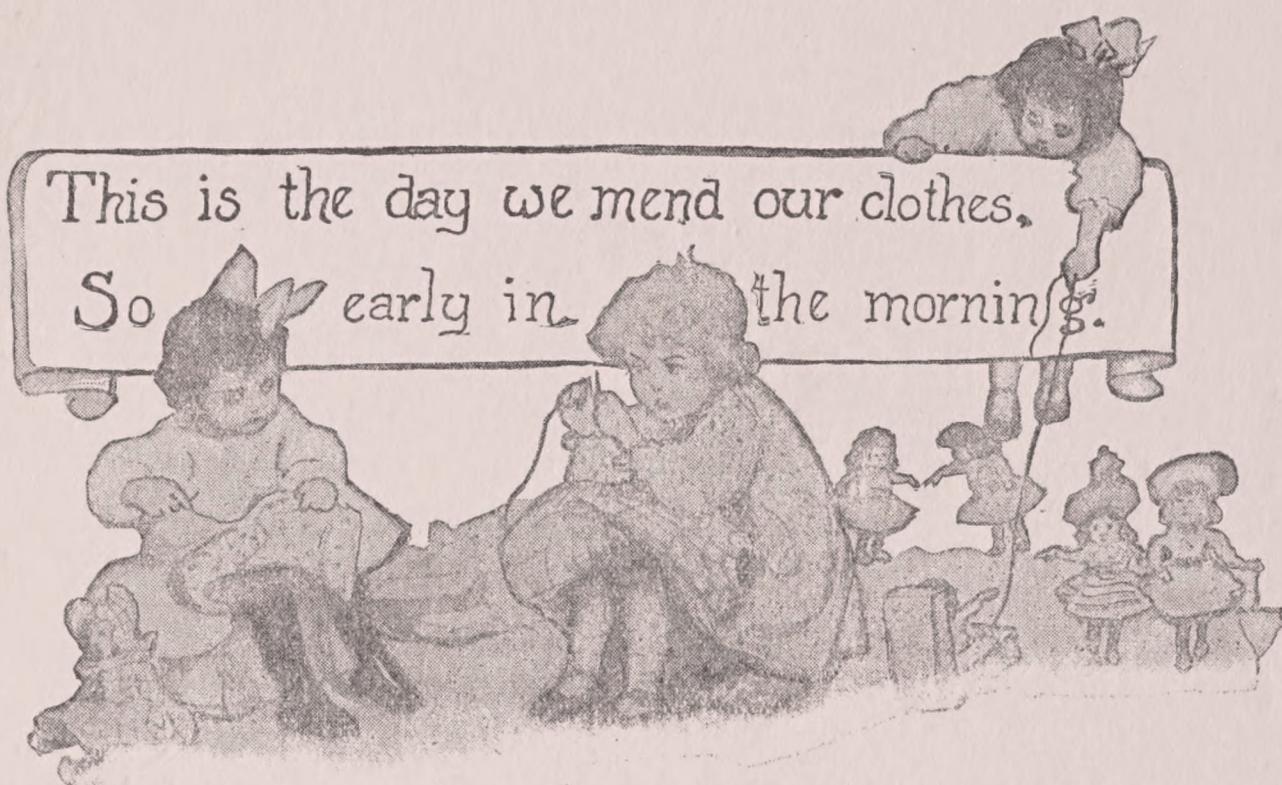
arousing poor grandma, who thought there must be an earthquake when she saw the shower of plaster falling about her. She was greatly relieved and amused when, on looking up, she saw the fat leg frantically struggling to be released. She called mama to go to the child's rescue.

The "villain" was soon himself again, and now, as it was growing late, the clothes were packed away, all except Mirandy's, for she was to join the family. This greatly pleased the children, as she was so unusual, and so delighted and happy to be with them.

"To-morrow," said mama, as they were about to start for home, "you must bring your own little work-baskets. Ask your mothers for some bright pieces, and we will make a lot of clothes for these

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small dolls. Thursday, you know, is visiting day, and we want them to be dressed up, for I know a lovely thing that is going to happen then, if the weather is good."



CHAPTER IV

Wednesday morning the play-room presented a picture of a *very* busy day.

The shabby dolls were undressed and measured for new clothes. While they waited they wore their pajamas and played about on the rug before the fire.

As mama cut out various garments, the girls

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mended the clean clothes they had ironed the day before, for mama said no good housekeeper ever put anything away till it was in perfect order, all ready to wear.

This done, the girls lost no time in getting at the new clothes. They busily plied their needles, eager for the moment to arrive when they could try them on and see how they fitted.

As they worked mama produced a number of spool boxes, in which she said the new garments should be kept.

“When I was a little girl we always had small dolls and kept their clothes in these boxes. The clerks in the dry goods stores were besieged by little girls begging for them. In the separate boxes we kept petticoats, silk dresses, cotton

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dresses, and so on. Then when we came to visit one another we piled these small boxes in one large one. That was a trunk, and we never saw any other kind of doll trunk."

The girls decided that mama's girlhood must have been very fascinating. She always seemed to know so many nice things to do that they never heard of.

They worked away, anxious to get enough clothes to fill the small boxes; mama helped, and before night each doll's wardrobe was complete and the little boxes were full.

There were tiny petticoats made from bits of embroidery; silk dresses from scraps of bright ribbons, cotton dresses of all colors. Then there were hats and bonnets, bead necklaces and bracelets.

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They dressed the dolls in the finery, and were standing off to admire them, when mama appeared with a surprise.

Janie's mama was most unusual, always thinking of something nice for them. This time it was a lot of fine carriages fashioned from the small boxes, each one covered with flowered creton of different colors.

The lid of the box was set up at one end, forming the back. With a string attached to the other end, the dolls could be drawn about the room. Very proud they were, dressed in their new clothes, to ride about in such gay coaches, with Rosabell and the other large dolls for horses.

The play-room was at once turned into a Boulevard, and it was some time before they wearied of



The play-room was at once turned into a Boulevard Page 48

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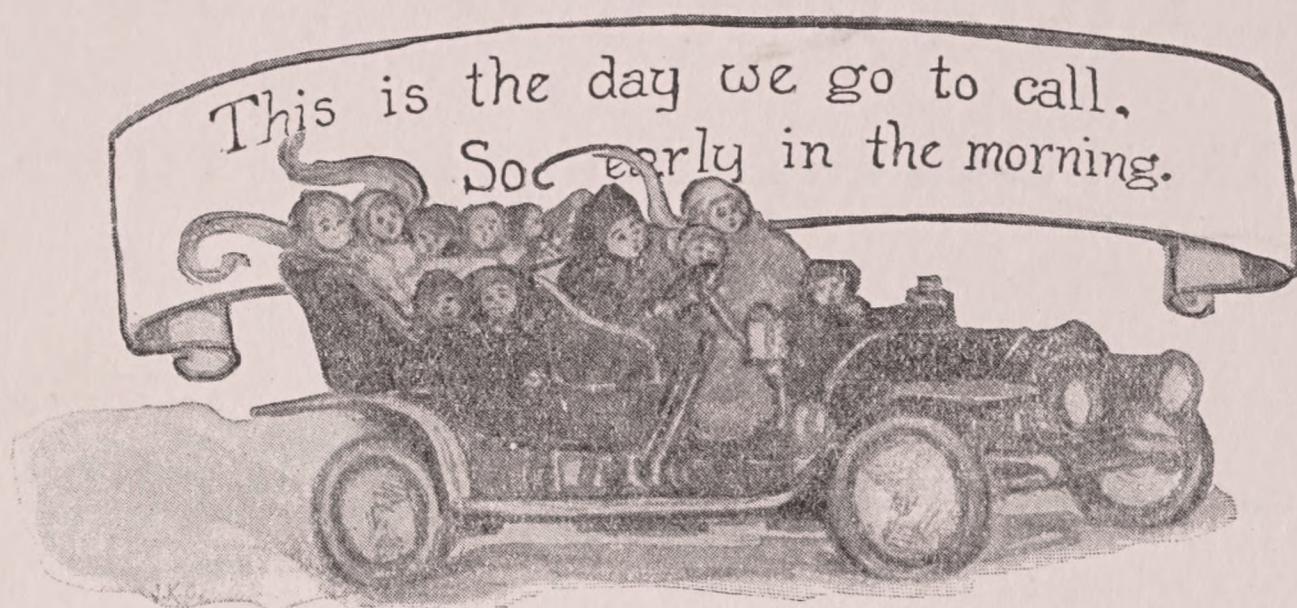
watching these ladies out for a fashionable drive.

“It is like the festivals they have in Paris,” said mama. “The carriages are trimmed in flowers, and the ladies ride round and round while the judges decide which is the prettiest, and then the prize is awarded.

“When I was there I rode in one of the flower-trimmed carriages. It was completely covered with roses, the wheels were trimmed with green, and the top was a mass of the beautiful flowers. A prince threw a bouquet at me, which I treasured for years. Now you’d better go out for a hop, skip and jump in the fresh air, then go to bed early and be ready for the treat the Queen will give you to-morrow. Be on hand with your dollies at nine o’clock sharp, and be sure to dress warm.”

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The children ran home with their dolls and boxes, all declaring that each day was better than the one before. Their last drowsy thoughts that night were, what more could be thought of that they had not yet done?



CHAPTER V

Thursday morning dawned bright and clear, and found the children in a great hustle preparing for they knew not what.

By nine o'clock they were on their way to Janie's, dressed so warm they felt like stuffed toads.

As they turned the last corner they saw in front of Janie's house two automobiles, one very large, in charge of a chauffeur, and the other a dear little

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thing in which were seated the King and Queen of Live Dolls.

The King was blowing the silver bugle, puffing out his cheeks till they were purple.

After a joyful greeting the children learned that they were to have a ride out into the country in the motor-car.

When Janie and Rosabell appeared, the children were tucked away in the large car, and the dolls in the small one with the King and Queen.

“You see,” said the Queen, “how kind the weather was! First the snow melted, and now the road we want to take is as hard and smooth as a floor. It is just cold enough and not too cold, so we shall have a fine time. We are to have luncheon at a hotel miles away. So here goes!” Wav-

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ing hands to the little group in the window, papa, mama, Topsy with baby, and Mirandy, away they flew.

“Why didn’t Mirandy come, Janie?” asked Dorothy.

“Mercy! She never even saw a railroad train, and when she saw these motor-cars, she looked so frightened, and said, ‘Land o’ Goshen! They haven’t any horses,—isn’t that awful!’ And when she found we were going in them she was horrified. She thinks we’ll never get back alive. The dolls have been telling her about telephones and telegraph wires, and she thinks this is a crazy world. In her day there was nothing but stage coaches, and it took ages to get anywhere or to send a letter. My, isn’t this lovely!” Janie

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leaned back to enjoy the ride and to watch the small car with its jolly chattering group.

For some miles all went well. They enjoyed the excitement their appearance caused, as was noted by the heads which appeared in the windows of the various houses they passed. Suddenly they were startled by hearing their driver exclaim in a shocked tone:

“Ach! they are gone!”

Sure enough, the small car had come to grief. No one knew how it happened, but when the children reached the spot they found the dollies all tumbled in a heap. The air was filled with cries and moans, which only lasted for an instant, as the Queen immediately waved her wand.

The children, wide-eyed and frightened, went

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over to help remove the injured dolls. The King and Queen, who were happily unhurt, were busily lifting out the now silent and maimed forms. It was a sad state of affairs.

“We’ll take them all back to that last house and see what can be done,” said the King. “It was lucky the Queen brought her wand. They don’t even know they are hurt, and I have some fine glue that mends so you can’t even find the crack. Just leave it all to me, and these little people will soon be as good as new.”

This cheery news stanched the tears that were ready to fall, and the children felt quite jolly when the Queen exclaimed:

“We’ll turn that house into a hospital. The King can be chief surgeon and we can be Red

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Cross nurses. When we get them all mended we'll have great fun watching the people when the dolls come to life. My, won't their eyes open wide!"

She led the way to the farm-house, where they found the whole family out watching them, seemingly paralyzed over the accident.

"Can we come to your house and stay while we get mended up?" the Queen asked.

"Certainly," said a sweet voice from the doorway; "come right in. What can we do for you?"

"We'll not make you much trouble. We have broken our dolls, and we want a table to lay them on while we mend them," said the Queen.

"You can have that and welcome,"—and the hostess drew out the table, placed some chairs

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about it and stood off to watch these strange proceedings.

“Are you Tom Thumb and his wife?” she inquired, as the King entered the room.

“Bless you, no! We are just dolls who have been alive many years.”

“Well, are you from that bewitched town we’ve heard about, where dolls come alive every so often?”

“You have guessed it,” laughed the Queen. “This morning we started for a pleasure ride, and this is what happened. So we want to get mended up and go on.”

As she talked, the little lady, with the children, worked rapidly, dexterously sorting out the various legs, arms, feet, hands and eyes. The King

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soon had them in place, and the dolls seemed in perfect order.

"Now," cried the Queen to her open-mouthed audience, "watch them come alive!"—and with her wand she drew the magic circle. At once the dolls sat up, looked about wonderingly, and started to walk. But, alas! The King and Queen never realized before how haste makes waste. Such a din you never heard! It was so funny the children sent up a shout, and the King and Queen, though vexed, had to laugh with them.

They had not paid especial attention to the various parts, taking it for granted that they all fitted. Alas, for such short-sightedness! The work must now be done over.

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As the dolls realized what was the matter, they went running about, looking for what rightfully belonged to them, exclaiming:

“You’ve got my other foot!”

“I want my own curly hair!”

“I’m lame. I can’t walk with one leg longer than the other. I’ll have to have a crutch.” Remembering the accident which had happened to the cook on a former occasion, one little dolly cried:

“I’m like Dinah, my feet are turned the wrong way.”

“My hair doesn’t go with my eyes at all,—who’s got my yellow hair?”

One poor little mite lisped timidly:

“My eyes don’t feel comfy. I keep looking at

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the end of my nose, when I don't want to.

What's the matter with them?"

"You poor little lamb, you are cross-eyed, and I do believe the King is color blind, for one eye is brown and one is blue! Come here, now, all of you, and let me find the mates to these eyes."

The dolls scrambled over one another in their efforts to range themselves in a row before the Queen, with eyes open very wide, each one much disturbed for fear she was the unlucky one.

"I can't find it," wailed the Queen, after searching carefully a dozen pair of eyes. "I can straighten her eyes, but I can't color them. My dear husband, however did this happen?"

The little King, looking very serious, peered



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“I always carry extra eyes in case of accident” Page 61

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anxiously into the mismated, and now tear-dimmed eyes, carefully scanned those open for inspection, and thought a moment. Then, much relieved, he put his hand in his pocket, drew out a number of eyes, and exclaimed:

“I remember now. I always carry some extra ones in case of accidents. Here they are. Which will you have, my dear, blue or brown? You pay your money and take your choice.”

“Well,” said the wee one bashfully, “my eyes always were blue, but I believe I’ll have brown for a change.”

“All right, brown it is”—and with a twinkle the little monarch mounted a chair and shouted, “I have a few more eyes left. Any one else want to change while we are at it? Now’s your chance to

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grow beautiful. No extra charge. Painless process!"

"Stop your nonsense, my dear," the Queen interrupted. "We must hurry. Be patient, dolls, and you will soon be all right." In a moment the dolls were again lifeless.

"Too bad," said the King. "All my fault,—I was in such a hurry. Now we'll try to correct these miserable blunders,"—and with his penknife he removed wigs, broken limbs, feet, and cross eyes. Soon he had these separate parts in their proper places, and they were ready to depart.

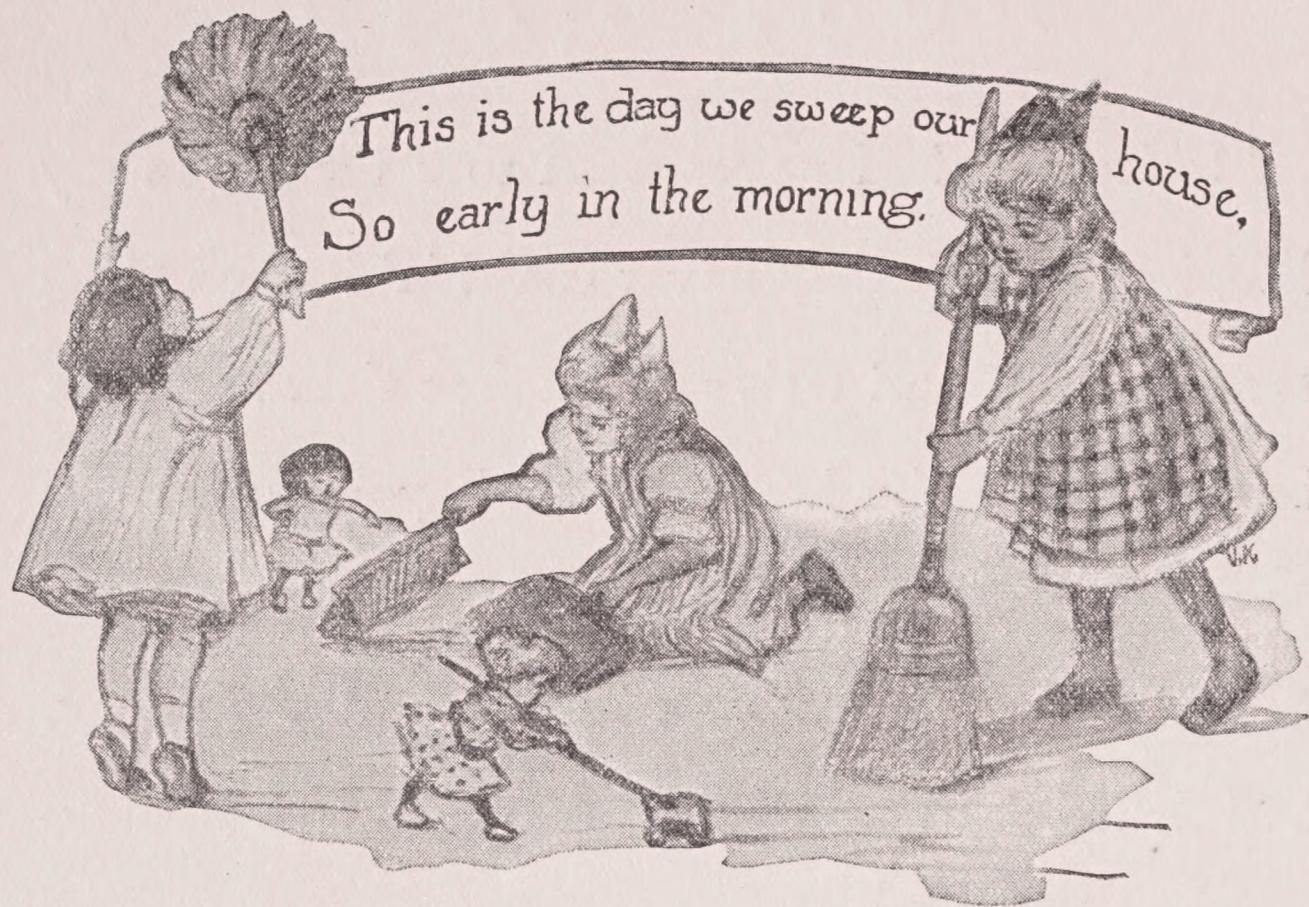
"Now may I pay you something for the trouble we have caused?" asked the Queen of the kind hostess of the farm-house, who had not missed one particle of this interesting performance.

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“Indeed, no! I never went to a theater in my life, but I think they never could ‘a’ had one better than this, and we’ve had a free ticket and the best place in the house. Thank you, and come again!”

And so the “play actor” folk went their way, had their hot luncheon, and reached home with no more mishaps.

When Mirandy heard the news, of course she said, “I told you so.” But the children declared it was all great fun, and that the accident turned out to be the most fun of all.



CHAPTER VI

“To-day,” said mama to the bright-eyed group armed with brooms, dust-pans and sweeping caps, “we are to sweep the doll house and put it in perfect order. The whole family has gone to Doll-ville, and will return Saturday. So I thought it would be a good plan to get the room ready for



They gladly took possession of Janie's beautiful doll house *Page 65*

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them. To-morrow when we bake we will fill Dinah's shelves with good things, which will delight her heart. She went with them to take care of the little ones."

This was the best of news to the children, and they gladly took possession of Janie's beautiful doll house, where the dolls and children had had so many happy hours, and went to work.

"Brush off the mattresses, shake out the blankets, and after you sweep, make up the beds with clean linen," instructed mama. "Each girl can take a room and do the best she can with the dolls' help."

And so they did, and a fine time they had sweeping and dusting, polishing the tiny panes of glass and various mirrors, arranging rugs and draper-

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ies. At last, when all was finished, mama came to view the result.

"It is a great pleasure to see work so well done; this was a good lesson for you all," she said, after inspecting each room. "I find no dirt in corners or under the furniture. Now, you can come over to the play-room and rest for to-day, as you have had a busy week."

"I'm looking forward to to-morrow," said one of Janie's little friends. "It will be such a lot of fun to use the tiny pans and to bake in the new oven."

"Come early and we will see if we can't turn out some bread and cake that any bake-shop might be proud of," said Janie's mother.

Janie was glad of a chance to cuddle her baby,



The other girls longed to take the baby

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for she had really been too busy this week to do her duty as a mother.

The other girls longed to take turns with the baby but mama thought they would better not. She said the baby would begin to wonder who her mama really was, she had seen so little of her lately.

“Let her stay with her mama to-day, and after she gets well acquainted with her, the rest of you can borrow her occasionally.”

“But maybe she won’t be alive after these busy days are over,” suggested one.

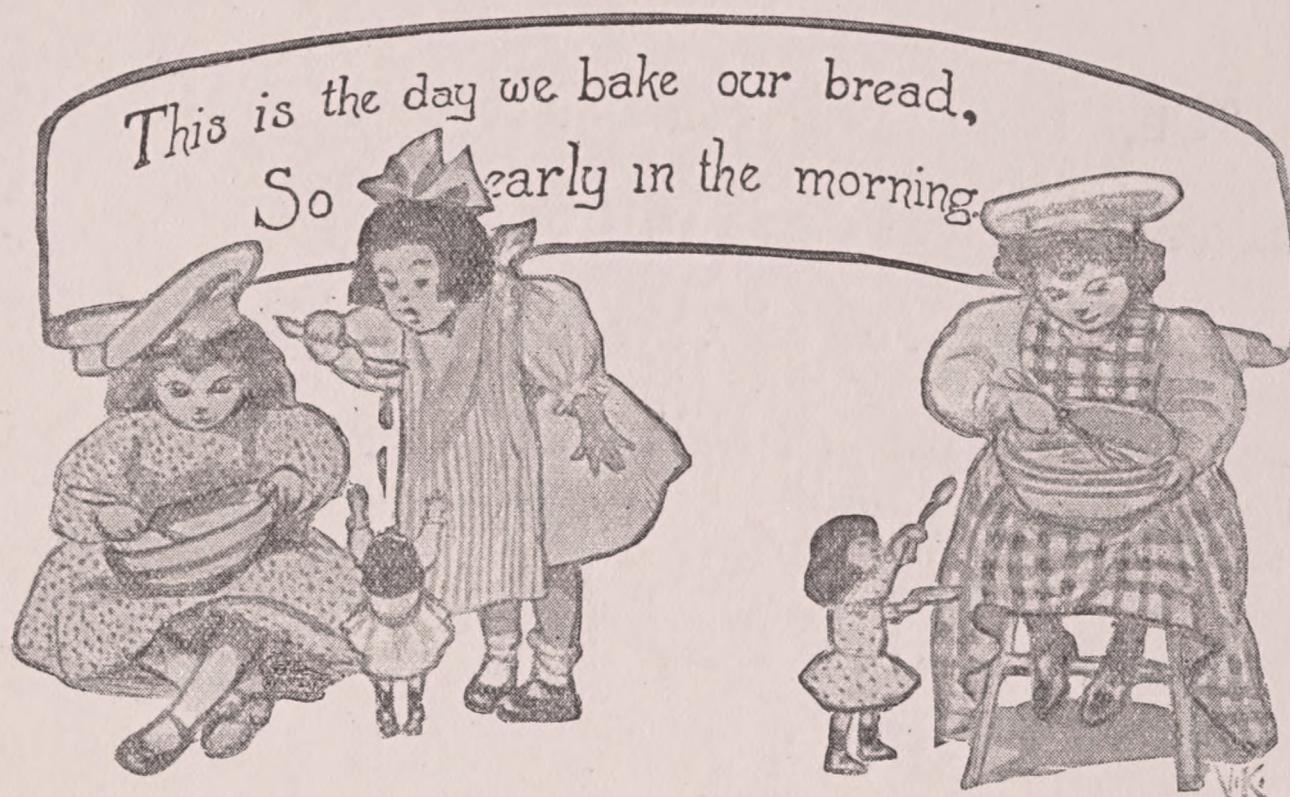
“Time will tell,” replied mama with a twinkle in her eye, “but I have a notion that Live Dolls are going to take possession of this town from now on.”

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“Do you think they are alive for always?”
chorused the girls.

“Well, I can’t say as to that, but I think you
can have them alive whenever you say the word.
Wait and see what the Queen has to say about it.”

This was joyful news with which to end the
day. The children went to their little beds, glad
indeed that they had been born in Cloverdale.



CHAPTER VII

As the children entered the play-room on Saturday morning, they heard Topsy singing the gay little tune at the top of her voice, soaring higher and higher:

“‘ Bake our bread, bake our bread,
This is the way we bake our bread,—’

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"Oh, have you come a-ready? Well, the missus and Miss Janie will be here in a moment," —and she went on with her work, getting out flour, sugar, eggs, raisins, milk and everything needed for the work of the day.

"Good morning, Busy Bees," said mama, who now appeared with Janie. "We'll get right to work, for we have so many things to make. Besides filling Dinah's shelves, I want to make enough for your tea-party."

Then all the children waited for orders from mama.

"The first thing to do is to scrub hands and nails well. I suppose yours are clean, but as that is such an important thing we will start in that way. We won't make bread to-day, but leave

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that for another time. You must all tuck your
curls into these caps; all tidy cooks do that."

After the bewitching little caps had been put on
mama gave a task to each one.

"First, we are to make a number of loaves of
cake. I shall let each child make one. We'll have
sponge cake, chocolate cake, bride cake, jelly cake,
and some plain loaves, besides cup cakes. Now,
we will get the raisins ready, sift the flour, beat
the eggs separately, measure the sugar, flour and
milk very accurately. Never guess at anything."

My, what a beating followed! What bliss to
see the butter and sugar grow creamy, and what
a lovely fluffy mass it was when the frothy eggs
were turned in! Finally, when the batter was
ready, a "try" cake was made. All watched

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eagerly for the moment when it should be taken from the oven, and when every crumb was devoured and it was pronounced perfect, the batter was poured into the round tins and square tins, and shut securely in the oven.

“Do not open the oven too soon, and when you do, be very careful not to slam the oven door, else the cake might fall. While these cakes are baking, we’ll stir up some good old-fashioned gingerbread.”

Here Mirandy came forward, eagerly saying: “Oh, let me have some dough. Grandma always used to give me some, and I made gingerbread dolls.”

“Me too, me too,” came from all the dolls.

Mama laughed as she gave them each a dough

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ball, while they crowded about Mirandy for instructions.

“This is all there is to it,” she said. “You just pat it out this way, and then pinch it up, cut out its arms and head, put in two currants for eyes, pinch up its nose so, and push in a mouth so, and there it is,— as plump as a partridge.”

Each child held up a doll to mama for inspection.

“That’s great,” said mama, laughing, “and we’ll lay them on this pan, and then into the oven they go.”

Before long the contents of the oven were ready to be removed, as the children learned by piercing each cake with a straw.

“Here, Mirandy,” cried Topsy, “take you-all’s

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gingerbread babies. Better try 'em with this straw first,"—and the dollies all stood about watching this operation with the greatest interest. As Mirandy poked the straw into a little fat stomach, the little Brownie sent forth such a squawk that the children and dolls jumped. Mirandy dropped the pan, whereupon the Brownies scrambled to their feet, jumped over the sides of the pan, and raced about, climbing on to the table in a jiffy, sampling currants, dipping fingers into the cake-dishes, where bits of batter remained, and licking their fingers in impish glee. One little rascal fell into the sugar-bowl head first, where he stood for a moment wildly kicking his feet in the air till Mirandy rescued him. Another stood on the edge of a bowl which contained yolks of eggs,



The little Brownie sent forth a squawk

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and in he went, flopping about, spattering the eggs all over everything.

Another teetered on the side of the platter full of chocolate frosting, and, of course, before he finished he had a chocolate-frosting bath.

This performance came so suddenly that the whole crowd was simply paralyzed and could do nothing but watch, for it was certainly a lightning act. The little midgets danced from one thing to another so quickly that no one could catch them. Rosabell did get hold of the Brownie who came from the egg bowl, but he slipped from her grasp like an eel!

They grew so very saucy that mama said emphatically:

“Mirandy, you must make them behave. They

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are your creations." Mirandy, greatly excited, cried:

"Stop, every one of you, or I'll burn you black in the oven!"

This awful threat sent them all over in a corner, where they cowered shivering, awaiting the punishment which they knew they deserved.

"Now stay where you are till I decide what shall be done."

Much troubled, she whispered to mama, asking what they could do.

"We can't even eat them," she said, "they would howl terribly. I'd feel like a cannibal."

It *was* a problem, and one mama hardly knew how to solve. She finally decided to telephone to the Queen. That settled it, of course, and the

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receiver was scarcely hung in its place before the Brownies lay on their backs, a pitiful sight, indeed.

“There,” said Mirandy to the dolls, “eat them if you can. I’m sure I can’t.”

“Indeed not,” said the dollies in chorus; “they were too cunning to eat.”

“Let’s stand them in a row on the mantel,” said Rosabell.

“Yes,” laughed mama, “and Miranda can make a motto and hang over them, ‘Be good if you want to stay alive!’ ”

“My! but we have wasted a lot of time over those monkeys. Now we must frost these cakes and make our pies,” said energetic Janie.

“Topsy, you can make the lemon filling. Mir-

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andy can peel some apples, and the others can help me," said mama.

She marshaled her forces well, and they all plunged into the work, while the dolls glanced fearfully at the Brownies.

"Speakin' of pies reminds me," said Topsy, "oncet I made a lemon pie, as purty a pie as you-all ever saw, with a big high frostin', an' I set it in the pantry winder. It was summer-time, an' what do you-all think happened? Cockadoodledo! There stood a rooster plumb in the middle of that pie, a-flappin' his wings an' a-spatterin' hisself wussern those Brownies, with frostin' and lemon custard. I screeched at him so hard he flew away lookin' mighty ruffled in his mind. Likely he wondered what kind of a mud-puddle trap I

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done set for him. But the whole thing went out of the window, though it was too bad,—such a good pie, an' he such a purty little rooster,—I reckon you-alls 've seen them guinea critters 'at looks as if they had gingham aprons on."

All shouted at this story, and mama said she had always admired those chickens, all speckled as if they had measles.

"Yes," said Topsy, "an' speakin' of measles, I done had 'em once. I went after 'em."

"You did!" said mama, surprised. "How did that happen?"

"Well, we-all was quite a fambly of chillens an' we'd never had the measles, and mammy heerd they had 'em up to Johnsings', a right smart piece up the road, an' so she 'lowed it was a good time

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for us to have 'em, spring cleanin' done gone by and she could take keer on us. So I walked all the way up there in the hot sun. I didn't jes' know what measles wus, but I 'lowed it would be nice to git somethin' for nothin', so I set round, an' Miz Johnsing she said, 'You better go home, Topsy, we done got measles here.' 'Yas,' I said, 'I know you have, an' I 'lowed I'd git a few to take home.' I waited right smart, and listened an' watched, but I didn't see nothin' of no measles. So I went 'long home, an' bime-by I done feel so mean, and mammy laffed and said, 'You done got 'em all right.' And sure enough, I did, and so did ever' las' one of us, and I guess mammy had enough of measles before all nine of us got well."

Another shout of laughter followed this funny

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story; but now the pies were baking, and the children all watched for them to come out of the oven. As Janie lifted the last one of lemon from the oven, exclaiming over its beauty, somehow it slipped, and went spinning over the floor, going around and around like a top.

As they all stood watching it, anxiously wondering which way it would turn when it finally got tired of its whirligig dance, Topsy came to and caught it just as it was about to flop over topside down.

“Now, let’s put this roast in the oven,” said mama, and they watched with interest while she prepared it for its fate.

“That will be all ready for Dinah to serve to the hungry dolls when they arrive. Now we will

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make a pan of biscuit, which we'll have with honey for our tea-party. Topsy may dice and cream those cold potatoes, and we'll set the table and try some of these good things, for I know you are all hungry."

So they ate off the pretty gold-banded plates, drank cocoa, which was poured from the cocoa-pot into the tiny cups, and had a merry party.

After it was over they placed the cakes and pies in tempting rows on Dinah's shelves. Then they came back to say good night and to thank mama for the lovely day.

"I'm glad you have enjoyed it; and now when you reach home get everything ready for church to-morrow. It is a good thing we can have a quiet day, for this week has been very full."

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So the little mothers departed with their brood of dolls, and that night their dreams were of Brownies, lemon pies, and speckled roosters, with a few measles sprinkled in between.



CHAPTER VIII

All the girlies in Cloverdale were singing this song on Sunday morning as they prepared themselves and their dolls for church.

As this was the Live Dolls' first appearance in that sacred edifice, the children knew that they

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must talk to them very seriously about good behavior.

“You mustn’t speak out loud,” said Janie.

The dolls, seated in a row, were much impressed, and one politely inquired what church was and what they did there.

“Well, church is where people go to sing and pray, and the minister talks and every one keeps very still, except when they sing.”

“Can we sing?”

“Yes, you may sing, but you must not talk, for that disturbs every one.”

As the bells pealed out their sweet message, the streets were filled with dolls and people.

Unusual interest was in the air, as five children were to be baptized,—quite an event in the vil-

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lage. This, together with the fact that Live Dolls were to be on hand, filled the church to the doors.

Mirandy Alviry Wiggins sat up very prim. *She* wouldn't turn her head, "not if the meeting-house took fire;" but the other dollies were twisting and turning, determined that nothing should escape their eyes.

All went well for a time. They listened attentively until the moment arrived when the minister announced the baptism. Up the aisle came a father, mother, and five little tots, one a tiny baby in arms. The children trotted bravely along, all except one small boy, who lagged behind. Suddenly, as he caught sight of the minister waiting for them, he turned, and shot like an arrow out of the church.

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This created much excitement, and one doll wildly cried to Janie:

“One got away! One got away!”

However, the sexton soon brought him back, to the great relief of all concerned.

After the ceremony came the sermon, and quiet reigned for a time.

But dollies, who aren’t used to being alive very often, do not like to keep still, and they were soon in a state of unrest.

Topsy, in her effort to be quiet, twisted a lock of hair about her finger so tight that her finger began to swell. When she found she couldn’t loosen it, she grew frantic, and tears began to drop as she asked Janie in an agonized whisper if the finger would have to be cut off.

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Janie released the imprisoned finger, and then, at a disturbed cry on the other side of her, she found another doll in trouble over a lost finger. It seemed to be a finger day. This doll, in putting her gloves off and on, accidentally left one glove finger turned in, and that silly doll, after matching the fingers of one hand to the other, found a finger missing and was much distressed.

Janie pointed out the missing finger, and had just got herself settled when she herself became fascinated over an unusual sight just in front of her.

An old man had dropped into a doze, and as he slept he nodded his head so hard his wig became loose. At last, at a sudden quick movement, it fell into Janie's lap. The poor man jumped and



Janie became fascinated over an unusual sight just in front of her
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looked around in dismay. Janie restored the lost property as quickly as possible, but a general titter was heard from those near enough to view the calamity. The wig was replaced, and Janie began to feel that her troubles were over, when she was suddenly startled by hearing a doll pipe up in shrill tones, to the tune of *Hiawatha*:

“ Oh, the lady of the Lake,
Found a snake in the cake.
Did she eat it, well, I guess she did,
I guess she did.”

A ripple of laughter swept over the audience at this outburst, and the musical soliloquy was rudely interrupted by Janie, who told her she must not do that.

“But you said I could sing,” sobbed the mite,

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and Janie had a serious time making her understand she could sing only when the others did.

"But they don't sing anything I know, and I want to go home. I'm hungry."

Begging her to be patient, Janie distributed some pink and white peppermints along the line, hoping they would last till closing time.

It was evident that many dolls were thus entertained, for when the collection plate was passed it was plentifully sprinkled with these candies.

Every one was glad when that service closed, and as they finally went out into the sunshine they could hardly resist skipping a little. Such a relief as it was to stretch their legs!

Mirandy, much shocked at the proceedings, remarked:

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“In *my* time children were seen and not heard; that little boy who ran away would have been put right to bed without any dinner, and that doll that sang—Land o’ Goshen! I tell you—she would have been fed on bread and water for one whole week!”

“My!” said Rosabell. “I’m glad we were not born then!”

That afternoon Janie gathered her brood in the play-room and was about to have a Sunday-school, when in walked the children and dolls of Cloverdale, headed by the Queen.

Janie welcomed them with fear written all over her face, for the busy days were now over, and she had been looking for the Queen to come and wave her wand. The other children shared this

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feeling and were much relieved when the Queen cried:

"You dear little mothers, you need not look so frightened, I shall not take your live dollies from you. On the contrary, I have brought you all here to tell you that the dolls can stay alive now for always. I hope you have profited by your busy days, and I want you to keep right on with them.

"Learn something in your play. Janie must learn how to take care of baby. You must all learn how to make doll clothes, how to wash, iron and mend them, and do it well. Cook and have your tea-parties, and I am sure you will learn how to keep house properly some day.

"I will now say good-by, leaving with you this bit of news: on Valentine's Day we shall have a

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party here. Come one, come all, come great and small,"—and with a quick nod she went off amid vigorous applause.

What bliss was before them now,—Live Dolls for ever, and a party!

Then they had a Sunday-school in earnest, the service consisting principally of singing, which was a great relief to their bottled up spirits.

I must pass over the days that followed, and take you at once to good St. Valentine's Day, which proved to be, if not a busy day, certainly a most delightful one.



CHAPTER IX

Bright and early our little maids were abroad,
tucking their white missives under doors and then
vanishing.

The dolls, too, were scattering their sweet mes-
sages about, and Love reigned supreme in Clover-
dale.

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The play-room was all trimmed up with bright tissue-paper hearts. The Queen had sent in a load of boxes, which Janie eyed longingly, but as the words, "Not to be opened" stared her in the face, she dared not even peep.

The children and dolls were promptly on hand, and had not long to wait for the Royal Couple.

When the King and Queen appeared and removed their long cloaks a murmur of delight swept over the room. They were both dressed as paper dolls, and how dear they looked!

With a gay little bow the Queen cried:
"How do you like our costumes? This is to be a paper-doll party, and we are all to be paper dolls!"

As she talked the King opened the boxes, and

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there, oh, the lovely things! Fluffy gowns, all colors of the rainbow!

She shook them out and gave one to each child, and one to each doll, bidding them go into the doll house and dress, for she had something she wished to arrange in the room they were in.

“Don’t come till I give the signal,” she cried as they danced away, each carrying her treasure.

Mama came in to see the fun and to act as maid. The dresses fitted to perfection, and at the given signal the children and dolls arranged themselves in a line ready to march out two by two.

Suddenly the bugle pealed; and then a band was heard, much to their surprise, and when a gay little march was played, the children did not have to be told to start. They simply could not keep

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still, and out they filed with cheeks red as roses, the paper gowns fluttering in all directions. Such dear little things were these gowns of crape paper, all fashioned after those seen on the dolls in Fluffytown.

As they marched into the room, they noticed that the rug had been removed. Arranged about the floor in a circle were a number of long boxes, standing on end.

The Queen, in the center of this magic ring, directed them to march around and seat themselves on the floor, each child and doll in front of a box.

“Now follow my directions exactly and see what happens.”

The children listened eagerly, greatly excited over this mysterious performance.

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The Queen glanced quickly about the room, motioned mama to place the fire-screen nearer the fire and to close one open window. Then raising her wand she cried:

“Take the lids from the boxes.”

The children obeyed, and a bubble of laughter was heard. No wonder, for they contained the loveliest valentines you ever saw—just the kind that send a thrill of joy over you when you are so fortunate as to receive them. You all know how they look to you when you remove the lid. You see first doors of flowers and shrubbery, with birds of all colors perched on the branches. When you pull a ribbon these doors fly back, and out step gay cupids or jolly little couples with hands on hearts, about to make elaborate courtesies.

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Perhaps the laddie holds out a bunch of flowers to the wee maid standing bashfully before him; or, possibly, he is urging her to accept a flower heart on which is written in golden letters:

“ When this you see
Remember me! ”

On such as these our little group gazed spell-bound. Suddenly the Queen called:

“ Attention! Stand your valentines up before you; be sure you have pulled the string so that the figures are in front of their own doors.”

Sweet strains of music filled the air. The Queen waved her wand, and then, oh! what *do* you think happened?

The cupids and lovers came to life, and went right on doing what they seemed to be about to do.

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Courtesies were finished, flowers were accepted by the winsome lassies. A few saucy cupids, with bows and arrows, snapped the strings, sending the arrows flying about the room.

Birds flew out from their leafy bowers on to the children's shoulders, where they softly peeped and chirped until gradually they gained courage and trilled their gay little songs to the accompaniment of the band.

The valentines now began to prance about the room, and very odd they looked with the paper backs flopping along behind. They greeted each other, sniffing at the flowers and admiring the birds which madly circled about their heads as though they knew their time was short and were determined to make the most of it.

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“Take partners for a waltz!” cried the Queen. The valentine lovers clasped hands, and away they whirled, with the children and the dolls.

The King and Queen joined them, and a merry time they had with quadrilles, minuets, two-steps and Virginia reels.

When this was over the Queen bade them all be seated in a circle as before, and refreshments were passed. Such goodies you never saw! Ice-cream in the shape of frozen cupids, birds, and flowers; cakes in the form of hearts, and for favors each child was presented with an enormous candy heart.

Did the valentines eat ice-cream? Well, I should say they did! While they ate, those saucy birds perched on the edge of their dishes and had

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their sip, and then, growing more bold, they flew to the shoulders of the children and pecked bites of food from their small red lips.

And now the Queen once more stood in the center of the circle, raised her wand, and said: "Take your last sniff of the flowers, and say good-by to the Valentines. Stand the boxes up on end as before."

Then to the Valentines:

"Make your bows, and take back your love-knots and blossoms, for you must go back to your own sweet dreamland."

As she was about to wave the wand, the King cried:

"Wait, my beloved,—what about the birds? How shall we get them back?"

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“Oh, I forgot,” laughed the Queen. “Put out the lights, please, for a moment.”

This done, the children saw by the dim light of the fire that the birds, thinking night had come, flew down at once in search of their nests, which they soon found. When they were settled all that could be heard was a gentle cheeping from the little birds; then there was a sudden silence, and they knew that the Queen had put them all to sleep.

The lights were now turned on, and the children and dolls rose to their feet and crowded about the King and Queen, crying:

“Oh, that was the best time! How could you ever think to do it? We shall never forget it!”

Then at a motion from mama they joined hands

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and, forming a circle, danced around the Royal Couple, singing:

“ This is the way we dance for joy, dance for joy, dance for joy,
This is the way we dance for joy,
On Valentine’s Day in the morning.”

This is the end of the busy days, and now I will tell you a secret! You must promise not to tell, and tell every one you see not to say a word about it. It is this: Since the Queen has left these dollies alive, Cloverdale is now a most bewitching place; and lest all the wee mothers may, like Peter Pan, find some wings and fly over there and decide to stay, I have been requested to take up my abode in that village and report all proceedings regularly.

So be content to stay in your own dear homes,

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and I shall do my best to tell you everything that happens.

Now I bid you a fond good-by until next time.

THE END

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